



July 17, 2017

**BY ELECTRONIC FILING**

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch  
Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: NOTICE OF EX PARTE**  
**PS Docket No. 15-91:** *Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On July 13, 2017, Rebecca Murphy Thompson and I of Competitive Carriers Association (“CCA”)<sup>1</sup>, and Nathan Sutter of Nex-Tech Wireless, spoke via teleconference with James Wiley, Linda Nagel, Marcus Brown, David Mansor, and Eric Manski of the Federal Communications Commission’s (“FCC” or “Commission”) Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau (“Bureau”) to discuss the Commission’s Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“Report and Order”) in the above-referenced proceeding.<sup>2</sup> CCA and its members continue to support the Commission’s goal to improve access to information in times of emergency. Specifically, CCA discussed the Commission’s recent reforms to the Wireless Emergency Alerts (“WEA”) program and encouraged the Commission to allow the technology to lead the policy, particularly for smaller carriers.

CCA first discussed the Commission’s efforts to update WEA to include embedded references and multimedia content, as well as to support multilingual alerting.<sup>3</sup> CCA agrees that these reforms will help communities to more clearly and efficiently communicate during imminent threats and local crises.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, CCA explained the technical capabilities necessary to implement multiple multimedia alerts could result in increased network congestion and undermine

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<sup>1</sup> CCA is the nation’s leading association for competitive wireless providers and stakeholders across the nation. CCA’s membership includes nearly 100 competitive wireless providers ranging from small, rural carriers serving fewer than 5,000 customers to regional and national providers serving millions of customers. CCA also represents nearly 150 associate members including vendors and suppliers that provide products and services throughout the mobile communications supply chain.

<sup>2</sup> *Improving Wireless Emergency Alerts and Community-Initiated Alerting*, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, PS Docket No. 15-91, et al., FCC 16-127 (rel. Sept. 29, 2016) (“WEA Report and Order” or “FNPRM”).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.* ¶ 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

network performance during times of emergency.<sup>5</sup> CCA also reminded the Commission that many carriers, especially those serving rural and remote areas, are still transitioning from 2G and 3G networks to newer technologies. To that end, the Commission must remain technology neutral and ensure that any compliance requirements are sufficiently flexible to allow carriers to complete these transitions prior to implementing WEA enhancements. Doing so will facilitate network upgrades to meet the Commission's enhanced WEA requirements, and prevent diverting funds to support additional content on legacy networks.

Likewise, CCA discussed the Commission's goal to narrow geo-targeting requirements from a county-level standard to a polygon-level standard.<sup>6</sup> CCA agrees that refining the delivery location of WEA will improve the quality of information that consumers receive during disasters and emergencies.<sup>7</sup> Despite this, CCA cautioned the Commission to ensure that any requirements are conditioned upon a carrier network's technical capability to support this upgrade. Specifically, as the FCC notes, capacity often is the most impactful issue when supporting next-generation requirements, and cell broadcast technology often has a limited capacity for seamless geo-targeting.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, CCA reiterated that certain timing and network costs could delay the upgrades necessary to support refined geo-targeting, specifically when looking to VoLTE deployment. Those concerns are magnified for non-nationwide carriers with fewer resources and a limited ability to influence standards development and equipment design.<sup>9</sup> The Commission should provide participating carriers an appropriate amount of time to adapt to changes in the program, including geo-targeting.

Finally, CCA commends the Commission for its voluntary program and reiterated its participating members' intent to continue providing consumers with WEA alerts to the extent feasible.<sup>10</sup> To facilitate this process, CCA advocated that any future requirements to provide WEA capability information to consumers at the point-of-sale should be flexible and allow providers to update this information in a reasonable timeframe, such as every quarter or bi-annually.

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<sup>5</sup> See *Ex Parte* Letter from Rebecca Murphy Thompson, EVP & General Counsel, CCA, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, PS Docket No. 15-91 (filed July 18, 2016) ("CCA WEA EP") (citing Comments of T-Mobile USA, Inc., PS Docket No. 15-91 at 6-7 (filed Jan. 13, 2016); Reply Comments of Sprint Corporation, PS Docket No. 15-91 at 4-5 (filed Feb. 12, 2016); *Ex Parte* Letter from Benjamin M. Moncrief, VP, Government Relations, C Spire, to Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary, FCC, PS Docket No. 15-91 at 1 (filed June 24, 2016)).

<sup>6</sup> WEA Report and Order ¶ 52.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* ¶¶ 50-57.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* ¶ 52.

<sup>9</sup> See CCA WEA EP at 2. See also, e.g., Reply Comments of Competitive Carriers Association, CG Docket No. 16-145 at 2 (filed July 25, 2016) (citing Comments of Competitive Carriers Association, CG Docket No. 16-145 at 4 (filed July 11, 2016) (noting that AT&T and Verizon both command important aspects of network development in many contexts, including equipment design and manufacture); Revised Petition of Competitive Carriers Association for a Waiver at 7-9, GN Docket No. 15-178 (filed Apr. 8, 2016)).

<sup>10</sup> FNPRM ¶ 184.

CCA and its members look forward to continued work with the Commission to further innovation and satisfy requirements necessary for enhanced emergency alerting for the benefit of consumers and industry alike. This *ex parte* notification is being filed electronically with your office pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's Rules. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

*/s/ Courtney Neville*

Courtney Neville  
Policy Counsel  
Competitive Carriers Association

cc (via email): James Wiley  
Linda Nagel  
Marcus Brown  
David Mansor  
Eric Manski